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Annual ministerial review: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development

Statement submitted by *Droit à l'énergie*, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2007/100 and Corr.1.

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Statement

Development and growth are essential in order drastically to reduce poverty. This development will be made possible by generating macroeconomic activity in the regions concerned. A vital prerequisite for such development is to give these villages and regions access to energy.

And when we speak of energy, electricity seems to be the form of energy that has the most common denominators as regards factors of development, health, access to drinking water, refrigeration, light, environmental sanitation and telecommunications. It is therefore urgent to develop local and regional production facilities in order to make available to the public the energy services needed to raise living standards.

This ambition naturally requires the agreement of the governments and authorities of the countries or regions concerned.

However, our organization, *Droit à l'énergie*, believes that there is one essential prerequisite for the success of such an endeavour: civil society must be associated at the outset in any energy access project.

This is a guarantee of transparency, but above all it is an intelligent move to organize, with other organizations in the field, a real survey of the needs and resources of the population.

It involves the need to meet each family which will have a short-term energy supply, in order to discuss with it how this energy will enable it to improve its standard of living.

This exercise, organized with associations and NGOs, should persuade a family, a village or a region to embark on individual or collective activities, thus ensuring macroeconomic growth.

Droit à l'énergie considers this to be a very important stage in the development process and recommends that organizations dealing with microfinance, fair trade and solidarity agriculture should be involved in order to give families every chance of success and the means to change their lives and overcome poverty.

Droit à l'énergie believes that, while institutions and countries have an essential role to play in infrastructure financing, the public should normally pay for energy consumption. Of course, part of such consumption can be subsidized in the form of reduced rates for the poorest.

Finally, the arrival of electricity in a region, if accompanied by this development, is very often a way of reducing migrant flows. In time, these flows are even reversed: people who had migrated to the big cities or to other countries come back to live in their villages, attracted by the economic development prospects.